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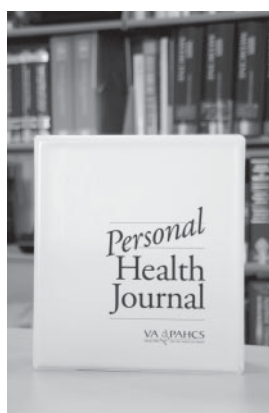
Health!

"Promoting Good Health Through Information"

Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System • Patient Education Newsletter • Fall 2002

The Personal Health Journal

Rosemary Gill, RN, MS and Nancy Abney, RN



Have you received your Personal Health Journal from your primary care team? If you have, you already know how much useful information it contains. You are enjoying the benefits of personal health updates each time you see your primary care provider. If you haven't received your journal yet, here is a preview.

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System is committed to providing you with excellent medical care and top quality patient service. We created this journal based on your survey feedback. The Personal Health Journal will keep you up-to-date and informed about your health care. With this journal you will have ready access to the information you need to be an active partner in your health care. The Personal Health Journal will give you current information about the VA Palo Alto Health Care System, services that are offered, and how to access those services. Here is

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Recipe for Health Apricot-Orange Bread

Only 1 egg and very little margarine are used in this low-saturated-fat, low-cholesterol, low-sodium bread.

1 (6 oz) package of dried apricots cut into small pieces	3-1/2 C sifted all-purpose flour
2 C water	1/2 C nonfat dry milk powder
2 Tbsp margarine	2 tsp baking powder
1 C sugar	1 tsp baking soda
1 egg, slightly beaten	1 tsp salt
1 Tbsp freshly grated orange peel	1/2 C orange juice
	1/2 C chopped pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly oil two 9x5-inch loaf pan.
2. Cook apricots in water in a covered medium-size saucepan for 10-15 minutes or until tender but not mushy. Drain; reserve 3/4 cup liquid. Set apricots aside to cool.
3. Cream together margarine and sugar. By hand, beat in egg and orange peel.
4. Sift together flour, dry milk, baking powder, soda, and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with reserved apricot liquid and orange juice.
5. Stir apricot pieces and pecans into batter.
6. Turn batter into prepared pans.
7. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until bread springs back when lightly touched in center.
8. Cool 5 minutes in pan. Remove from pan and completely cool on wire rack before slicing.

Yield: 2 loaves **Serving Size:** One 1/2-inch slice

Each serving provides: 97 calories; 2 g total fat; less than 1 g saturated fat; 6 mg cholesterol; 113 mg sodium

From www.nhlbi.nih.gov

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The Personal Health Journal

a sample of the personalized material your journal will contain:

- Future appointments
- Most current medication profile
- Latest lab and test results
- Immunization and health maintenance records
- Pertinent patient education material
- A section for your advance directive

When you get your journal, please bring it with you to each clinic appointment and for each hospital admission. We

want you to be well informed about your health status, health care, medications, and test results. With the Personal Health Journal you can refer to this information as often as you like at your own convenience.

For more information about the Personal Health Journal, ask your primary care treatment team. As always, they will be happy to answer your questions and provide you with a journal if you do not have one.

VAPAHCS Personal Health Journal...our commitment to patient education and your satisfaction.

Cholesterol Quiz

Check your cholesterol and heart disease I.Q.

- T F** 1. To lower your blood cholesterol level you must stop eating meat altogether.
- T F** 2. To lower your blood cholesterol level you should eat less saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol, and lose weight if you are overweight.
- T F** 3. All vegetable oils help lower blood cholesterol levels.
- T F** 4. Lowering blood cholesterol levels can help people who have already had a heart attack.
- T F** 5. Women don't need to worry about high blood cholesterol and heart disease.

Answers to Cholesterol Quiz

1. False. Although some red meat is high in saturated fat and cholesterol you do not need to stop eating it or any other single food. Red meat is an important source of protein, iron, and other vitamins and minerals. You should, however, cut back on the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol that you eat. Choose lean cuts of meat with the fat trimmed and watch your portion sizes—eat no more than 6 ounces of meat a day.

2. True. Eating less fat, especially saturated fat, and cholesterol can lower your blood cholesterol level. How much your level drops depends on the amounts of saturated fat and cholesterol you used to eat, how high your blood cholesterol is, how much weight you lose if you are overweight, and how your body responds to the changes you make.

3. False. Most vegetable oils—canola, corn, olive, safflower, soybean, and sunflower oils help lower blood cholesterol when used in place of saturated fats. However, a few vegetable oils—coconut, palm,

and palm kernel oils—contain more saturated fat than unsaturated fat. However, be sure to limit the total amount of any fats or oils, since even those that are unsaturated are rich sources of calories.

4. True. People who have had one heart attack are at much higher risk for a second attack. Reducing blood cholesterol levels can greatly slow down and even reverse the buildup of cholesterol and fat in the wall of the coronary arteries, reducing the chances of a second heart attack.

5. False. Blood cholesterol levels in both men and women begin to go up around age 20. Women before menopause have levels that are lower than men of the same age. After menopause, a woman's LDL-cholesterol level goes up and so her risk for heart disease increases. For both men and women, heart disease is the number one cause of death.

*National Cholesterol Education Program
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute*

Please join us for a series on

HEALTHY AGING

11/20/2002

**Preventing Falls in and
Around the Home**

1/15/2003

Coping with Caregiving

All sessions will be held from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. at the Palo Alto Division: 3801 Miranda Avenue, Palo Alto, Building 101, 2nd Floor, Library Conference Room A2-120. You may bring your "brown bag" lunch. Dessert and coffee will be provided.

What is Dementia?

Betty Wexler RN, MSN, CNS Gerontology, GRECC Geriatric Clinic



Many people are very concerned about having or getting dementia. It is good to know a little about dementia so that you can ask your provider questions and get the care you or a loved one may need.

Dementia is the loss of mental functions such as memory, thinking, and reasoning. These losses often make it hard for a person to do what they are used to doing every day. For

example, one who used to be able to make a sandwich may no longer have this ability, or may make a sandwich and then put it in the drawer instead of the refrigerator. This is only one example of behavioral changes that should be reported to your provider.

Dementia is not a disease itself, but is a group of symptoms that can be caused by other diseases or conditions. These symptoms can include a change in personality, mood, and behavior.

Dementia may develop when the brain is affected by infection or disease. The parts of the brain that are affected are usually related to learning, memory, decision-making, and language. The risk of dementia increases with age. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, but there are many other known causes. Most of these other causes are rare and may even be treatable.

Examples of dementias that may be treated are those caused by drugs, alcohol, and vitamin or hormone imbalances. Although a person may seem to have dementia, severe depression may sometimes be the cause of the symptoms. Treatment of the depression may relieve the symptoms of dementia. In most cases, however, dementia cannot be cured.

Reporting any of the above mentioned symptoms early on is important because early medical attention and education may help slow the onset of dementia. Your provider will be able to order laboratory tests and make special assessments. There are many ways to help people with dementia. The first step is talking with your provider. Do not let fear stop you from doing this.

Medication Reminders

Perrin French, MD

The medications you are prescribed for your medical conditions are a means of curing illness or relieving debilitating symptoms. The decisions made regarding medications and doses are the results of hours of examination, laboratory evaluation, and analysis by skilled diagnosticians.

Failure to take medicines as prescribed makes useless all the effort put into getting properly evaluated and diagnosed. Moreover, it can put you at risk of getting worse and needing more intensive, and perhaps riskier, treatment.

Yet studies have shown the rate of compliance with medications to generally be partial to poor. It seems difficult to remember to take our medications. How to resolve this problem?

Research indicates our degree of compliance with prescribed



medications can improve by using pillboxes with compartments organizing our medicines according to the days of the week and the times of day we should be taking them.

Thanks to the generosity of the Mission City Post 564 of the American Legion, pillbox organizers of this sort are available for free, upon your request, at our VA pharmacies. Called Medi-Trays, each organizer holds seven smaller boxes, one for each day of the week, with each smaller box divided into four compartments labeled for the different times of day. If you take the time to fill the Medi-Tray properly once a week, remembering to take your pills on time every day can become a lot easier.

If you are having trouble remembering to take your medications, ask your VA pharmacist for a free pillbox organizer.

VA Palo Alto Health Care System Facilities

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3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 493-5000

VA LIVERMORE DIVISION

4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
(650) 493-5000

VA MENLO PARK DIVISION

795 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 493-5000

VA CAPITOLA OPC

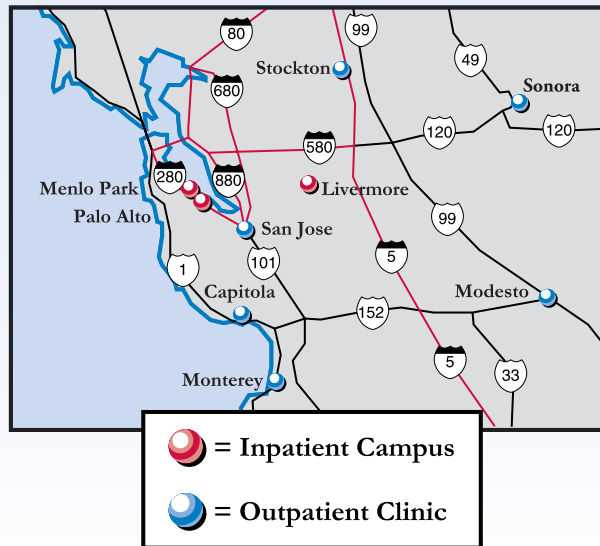
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Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010
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VA SAN JOSE OPC

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San Jose, CA 95119
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720 Pauline Court,
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Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 533-5470

VA STOCKTON OPC

500 W. Hospital Road
Stockton, CA 95231
(209) 946-3400

World Wide Web Address:
www.palo-alto.med.va.gov



If you are interested in joining a Hepatitis C Support Group

at VA Palo Alto, Menlo Park,
or Monterey, contact
**Barbara Cunningham, RN, at
650-493-5000, ext 60281.**

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions or topics you would like
addressed in "To Your Health" feel free to send in
your request via postal mail or e-mail to:

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To Your Health is published quarterly for VAPAHCS
veterans and their families.

Editorial Board

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Kris Morrow

HEALTHY HINTS

Consider these tips for reducing risk of heart disease:

- Get your cholesterol levels checked.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about lowering your risks.
- Read food labels. Choose foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Be physically active. Brisk walking for at least 30 minutes everyday or three 10-minute physical activities each day are excellent means of exercise.
- Don't smoke. If you do smoke, contact your healthcare provider to discuss ways in which they can help you quit.